

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2012*

**Memorandum Establishing Policies for Addressing Domestic Violence in the Federal Workforce**

*April 18, 2012*

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies*

*Subject:* Establishing Policies for Addressing Domestic Violence in the Federal Workforce

Despite the considerable progress made since the initial passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 (Public Law 103–322), domestic violence remains a significant problem facing individuals, families, and communities. Domestic violence causes two million injuries each year, and an average of three women in the United States die each day as a result of domestic violence. While a disproportionate number of victims are women, domestic violence can affect anyone.

The effects of domestic violence spill over into the workplace. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that domestic violence costs our Nation \$8 billion a year in lost productivity and health care costs alone, and other studies have suggested that the full economic impact is even higher. Moreover, many victims of domestic violence report being harassed in the workplace or experiencing other employment-related effects.

As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government should act as a model in responding to the effects of domestic violence on its workforce. Executive departments and agencies (agencies) have taken steps to address this issue, including by enhancing the quality and effectiveness of security in Federal facilities and by linking victims of domestic violence with Employee Assistance Programs. By building on these important efforts and existing policies, the Federal Government can further address the effects of domestic violence on its workforce.

It is the policy of the Federal Government to promote the health and safety of its employees by acting to prevent domestic violence within the workplace and by providing support and assistance to Federal employees whose working lives are affected by such violence. Therefore, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby direct the following:

*Section 1. Government-wide Guidance to Address the Effects of Domestic Violence on the Federal Workforce.* Within 240 days of the date of this memorandum, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) shall, in consultation with the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and other interested heads of agencies:

(a) issue guidance to agencies on the content of agency-specific policies, as required by section 2 of this memorandum, to prevent domestic violence and address its effects on the Federal workforce. The guidance shall include recommended steps agencies can take as employers for early intervention in and prevention of domestic violence committed against or by employees, guidelines for assisting employee victims, leave policies relating to domestic violence situations, general guidelines on when it may be appropriate to take disciplinary action against employees who commit or threaten acts of domestic violence, measures to improve workplace safety related to domestic violence, and resources for identifying relevant best practices related to domestic violence;

(b) establish a process for providing technical assistance to agencies in developing agency-specific policies, consistent with the guidance created pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, that meet the needs of their workforce; and

(c) consider whether issuing further guidance is warranted with respect to sexual assault and stalking and, if so, issue such guidance.

*Sec. 2. Agency-Specific Actions and Policies.* (a) Within 90 days from the date of this memorandum, each agency shall make available to the Director of OPM any existing agency-specific policies and practices for addressing the effects of domestic violence on its workforce.

(b) Within 120 days from the issuance of the guidance created pursuant to section 1 of this memorandum, each agency shall develop or modify, as appropriate, agency-specific policies for addressing the effects of domestic violence on its workforce, consistent with OPM guidance. Each agency shall submit for review and comment to the Director of OPM, a draft new or modified agency-specific policy. In reviewing the draft agency-specific policies, the Director of OPM shall consult with the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and other interested agency heads. Each agency shall issue a final agency-specific policy within 180 days after submission of its draft policy to the Director of OPM.

*Sec. 3. General Provisions.* (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

The Director of OPM is hereby authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

BARACK OBAMA

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NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on April 23.

*Categories:* Communications to Federal Agencies : Domestic violence in Federal workforce, memorandum establishing policies for addressing.

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